

Colton Hills Community School

Jeremy Road, Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, WV4 5DG

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher has transformed the standard of education in the school since the previous inspection.
- Actions taken by governors and school leaders at all levels have improved the quality of teaching and raised students' achievement.
- Students in the main school are currently making good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers ask searching questions that provide a good level of challenge to all students, including the most able.
- The progress of disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is also good.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive a good level of support. They make progress in line with other students nationally.
- The sixth form is good. Students, including disadvantaged students, are achieving improved standards across a wide range of subjects.
- The school has been successful in improving the standard of students' literacy and encouraging a love of reading. This has led to good achievement, particularly for those at an early stage of learning English.
- Behaviour is good. Students demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning, show respect for each other and have pride in their school.
- Safety is good. Pupils feel safe in school and learn how to be safe outside of school and on the internet.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The successful promotion of mutual respect and the celebration of diversity are at the core of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School leaders do not ensure that all teachers make consistently good use of the school's system for marking students' work.
- While the school has worked hard in challenging circumstances to improve attendance, it remains below the national average.
- The progress of students is not consistently rapid in the school as not enough teaching is yet outstanding.
- The school has only been partially successful in its work to involve parents in the life of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 41 lessons across the school, including in the sixth form. Of these, 15 were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books and folders.
- As well as conversations in lessons and at social times during the inspection, discussions were held with four groups of students about the quality of their educational experiences and the standard of behaviour in the school. The inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate a report. However inspectors examined the school's own recent questionnaires of parents. Inspectors also considered the 46 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information on students' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Robert Steed	Additional Inspector
Bianka Zemke	Additional Inspector
Lynn Stanbridge	Additional Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Colton Hills School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The largest of these groups is composed of students with an Indian heritage. Less than a fifth of students are from White British backgrounds.
- Over three-fifths of students speak English as an additional language and of these an increasing proportion are at a very early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students who join the school between Year 8 and Year 11 is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above the national average. The school has specially resourced provision for students who have moderate disabilities. There are currently no students using this provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of students attend part-time or full time provision off the school site at The Lawnswood Campus, Wolverhampton and at the Orchard Centre, Wolverhampton.
- A very small number of sixth form students attend courses off site as part of collaboration with Heath Park School, Highfields School and Wednesfield High School.
- Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher who took up his post in September 2013. There have also been a large number of changes in school staffing.
- The headteacher provides support as an interim executive board member of New Park Special School, Wolverhampton.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and so raise achievement further by all teachers:
 - consistently applying the school's policy for marking students' work and ensuring students respond to it
 - including an even greater level of challenge in the work they set less able students so that progress is more consistently rapid.
- Improve attendance further in the main school by developing closer links with parents and maintaining high expectations of attendance from all groups of students.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by school leaders and governors giving more opportunities for parents to become fully involved in the life of the school and so gaining a better understanding of their views.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection the school has undergone a positive transformation: over fifty members of staff have moved on; the school has completely restructured its leadership team; teachers are more accountable for the performance of their students; expectations of what students can achieve have risen. As result, good teaching and good behaviour are now flourishing at this school.
- This has been achieved against a background of the steadily falling attainment of those entering the school and a growing proportion of students joining the school between Year 8 and Year 11. In addition, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of students at an early stage of learning English and the school has also inherited some financial constraints. While these challenges have slowed the desired pace of improvement, they have been successfully tackled with determination and vigour. The school is now offering a good standard of education to all its students.
- Staff, students and those parents who are more engaged with the school all share pride in the school's recent achievements and a commitment to the culture of high expectations. School leaders at all levels are highly effective at managing their areas of responsibility. They rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and accurately assess students' progress. Any underachievement is swiftly addressed and the good progress of students currently on roll shows the capacity of leaders to make further improvements.
- Most school policies, including on assessment and behaviour, have been consistently and successfully implemented and have led to improvements in students' attitudes to learning and the fostering of good relations between students, staff and the wider community. The school's marking policy has yet to be adopted by all teachers with the same degree of consistency. The school is beginning to implement new systems of assessment that generate higher levels of expectation for students' 'mastery' of skills and understanding.
- Students, including disadvantaged students, make good progress at this school, often in spite of considerable barriers to their achievement. This is as a result of the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and to ensuring equal opportunities for all students, particularly through effective spending of the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 'catch-up' funding.
- The assessment of students new to English is robust and basic English and mathematics skills are quickly determined and shared with all staff. All teachers have had extensive and ongoing training in the most effective methods to support the learning of these students. This is very evident in classroom practice throughout the school.
- The school's curriculum has been redesigned to match the changing needs of the school's students and literacy is therefore a high priority. This has been addressed by a strong focus on reading and all students in the main school have twenty minutes dedicated reading time in the course of each school day. Combined with one-to-one and small group work this has been successful in raising the frequently low reading age of students. At Key Stage 4 there are five different pathways that students can follow in a highly personalised curriculum. This includes work-related courses and improving basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Students benefit from a weekly 'enrichment' programme that provides them with useful skills that successfully help to prepare them for their future lives. In conjunction with class tutor time and a carefully organised programme of assemblies, tailored to the needs of each year group, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well promoted. This leads to students having a clear understanding of British values, for example through practising democracy in a mock general election and through the student council. The school recently received a visit from Mervyn King, the former Governor of the Bank of England, helping to raise students' aspirations and broaden their horizons. The school provides opportunities for students to attend a range of sports and other clubs after school and attendance is monitored to ensure that all groups of students make good use of them.
- Students from Year 7 onwards have access to independent and impartial advice on careers, training and further education. Strong partnerships with local primary schools have led to smooth and effective

transitions to secondary school and a shared approach to new ways of assessing students' progress.

- The local authority has offered good support to the headteacher in driving school improvements. The local authority has demonstrated its confidence in the headteacher and in the stability he has brought to the school by asking him to support a local special school.
- The school meets all requirements to safeguard the well-being of its students. All staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding, and effective procedures are in place. The school ensures that staff do all they can to protect students, themselves and the school. For example, all staff are required to sign to acknowledge they are familiar with all safeguarding arrangements, including a policy for the responsible use of social networking.
- The school has endeavoured to improve communication with parents but with limited success. There are only a small number of respondents to questionnaires and there are low levels of attendance at meetings. The school's work to improve attendance, using texting for example, has been partially effective but some families are proving to be very hard to reach.
- The very small number of students who attend provision off the school site achieve well and school leaders check their progress, attendance and behaviour carefully.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. Through regular visits to the school and the focused work of different working committees, governors now have a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school and of students' achievements. Minutes of the governing body show governors are increasingly confident in challenging senior leaders in all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors have had to make hard decisions about spending within tight financial constraints. They have succeeded in putting the welfare and achievement of students first. The spending of the pupil premium funding and Year 7 'catch-up' funding has been effective and has been well monitored and evaluated. Governors have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the management of teachers' performance through detailed information about salaries and applications for promotion. They have been unafraid to tackle any underperformance.
- The governing body has undergone training to improve its performance and governors take their statutory duties very seriously, particularly in regard to the further strengthening of safeguarding.
- Governors recognise that attendance is below average and that the relatively small numbers of parents who complete school surveys shows that the school could do more to engage parents.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students consistently display positive attitudes to their learning, which contribute to their good progress. They are proud of their work, their appearance and their school.
- School leaders have encouraged a culture of respect in which diversity is celebrated alongside high expectations of all learners and staff. Students from a wide range of faiths and backgrounds enjoy sharing their experiences and beliefs with each other. Behaviour around the school is of a high standard.
- Low-level disruption in class is very rare and when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively using the new behaviour policy. Parents, staff and students agree that this results in improved progress in lessons.
- High standards and robust new policies have led to marked improvements in behaviour over time. Students are unanimous in confirming the improvements in behaviour, particularly in the classroom and they are clear that this has helped them to make better progress.
- The high proportion of students who join the school in the middle of the year or mid-way through their school careers settle quickly into school routines. These students in particular say that the school is a

friendly and caring place to be.

- Attendance is below the national average but is improving. School leaders have implemented rigorous and effective policies and strategies that have brought about these improvements for all groups of students. The school has had less success in communicating the vital importance of good attendance to some families who are harder to reach.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say they feel safe at this school 'and wouldn't want to go to another one'. They show good knowledge of dangers to their safety outside of school and on the internet. The school's system of 'vertical' tutor groups, in which all year groups in the main school mix together, encourages helpful discussion of important issues.
- The school's 'Learning Support Centre' provides additional support for a wide range of students including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. While the centre offers a quiet and caring environment, the focus is on learning and improving students' achievement. As the headteacher has said to all his staff, 'Care isn't care without ambition and support isn't support without challenge'.
- There are seldom any incidents of bullying and students say that teachers deal promptly with any that arise. Students are now very rarely excluded from the school and good use is made of a 'reflection room'.
- Arrangements to support the few students studying off site are good. There are clear arrangements with providers to check the safety and attendance of students.
- Safety is not yet outstanding because, while attendance is improving, those students who are not in school are not benefiting from the school's work in teaching them how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students across all year groups are engaged in their learning and are motivated by well taught, stimulating lessons that leads to their good achievement over time.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong and this results in good behaviour in the classroom. Teachers know their students well and are able to ask probing questions that help students to understand themes in English, for example, or operations in mathematics. They also offer a good level of challenge to the most able, encouraging them to make interesting connections in their studies, often between different subject areas. This is also true in the sixth form, in which teaching is also good. The same level of challenge is not always as evident for less able students and so they do not consistently make rapid progress.
- Teachers check students' progress closely and have a very clear idea of the performance of each in their class, including those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged students.
- Teachers in all subjects are very aware of the needs of students for whom English is an additional language. There is evidence of teaching improving students' literacy skills in a wide variety of lessons and all staff are aware of the reading age of each student. Many staff also promote a love of reading for pleasure among students. Students talk enthusiastically about their mathematics lessons and teachers use situations from everyday life to make concepts relevant and accessible.
- The small number of support staff in the school make a strong contribution that is disproportionate to their number. This is because their experience and expertise is used well to support a wide range of students and is shared with all the teaching staff.
- Students' books show that all groups of students are currently making good progress and working to an

appropriate standard across a wide range of subjects. Homework is set regularly and helps to reinforce students' learning. Improvements in the teaching of science and of languages have led to students now making much better progress in these subjects.

- Not all teachers consistently apply the school's marking policy. Students say that this makes it harder for them to understand what they need to do to improve in some lessons.
- The quality of teaching of the very small number of students who attend alternative provision on a part-time basis is monitored and helps these students to make progress and to remain in education.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The new headteacher has driven improvements in teaching that have led to a rise in achievement for students in this school. In spite of the legacy of weaker teaching in previous years, achievement has been rapidly improving and is now good.
- Students typically enter the school with attainment that is below, and increasingly well below, the national average. Attainment by the end of Year 11 has been below the national average because:
 - the proportion of students who are at an early stage of learning English is considerably higher than the national average and is increasing
 - many of these students also belong to the much higher proportion of students than is found nationally who join the school between Year 8 and Year 11.
- As a result of improved quality of teaching the school confidently and realistically predicts that students currently at the school are on target to achieve standards that show a marked improvement on previous years.
- All groups of students, including those new to learning English and those that belong to ethnic minority groups, are making good progress in relation to their starting points. The proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in mathematics and English has been close to that seen nationally. The progress of students currently in the school in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good. Students in Year 11 are on target to make considerably better progress than in previous years across a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and languages.
- Although a smaller proportion of most able students enter the school than is found nationally, they achieve well. The attainment of the most able students has been in line with national averages for the last two years, as has their progress in mathematics. The progress of this group of students in English was above the national average in 2014.
- The gap between the proportion of disadvantaged students and others who achieve five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has narrowed each year since 2012. In 2014, in English, the in-school gap was around one and a quarter of a grade and the national attainment gap was around one and a half of a grade; in mathematics, the school and national gaps were one and a half of a grade and one and three-quarters of a grade, respectively.
- The progress of disadvantaged students throughout the school is similar to other students and the gaps in attainment for current students are on target to continue to narrow in 2015. This is as a result of well-targeted support by school leaders and improved quality of teaching for all students.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. The proportion making expected progress in mathematics and in English has been in line with that found nationally and is improving. The care and guidance of this group of students is good and the school leader responsible for special needs has improved the identification of specific needs and the school now provides more effective academic support.
- The school's work with the large number of students for whom English is an additional language is

recognised by the local authority as being a strong model of good practice. These students make rapid progress in learning English and are soon able to access the full range of the school curriculum.

- For the very small number of students who attend alternative provision, small gains in achievement can be seen within the context of successfully monitoring their safety and keeping them within formal education.
- The improvements in achievement in the sixth form have followed the same pattern as in the rest of the school. Students currently in the sixth form are making good progress as a result of improved quality of teaching.
- The school does not enter any students early for GCSE examinations.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. The school's own information indicates that current A level and AS level students are working at standards that are at least half a grade above the previous year and ahead of the previous year's national averages. While the smaller number of students on work-related courses are performing marginally less well than the previous year, the school meets the government's current minimum standards for both academic and work-related qualifications.
- The proportion of students entering the sixth form with the highest GCSE grades has typically been below the national average. This means that, although many make good progress, the proportion achieving the highest grades at A level has also been below the national average. In the current school year, however, the school has been successful in attracting more of the most able students into the sixth form. School information about their progress shows these students are on track to achieve well.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Following the recent reorganisation of the curriculum and the further raising of entry requirements, the sixth form is attracting increasing numbers of students who are following appropriate courses. These courses offer appropriate levels of challenge and lead to positive outcomes for students. The impartial information and advice about careers and further education that is offered throughout the sixth form is extensive and highly appreciated by students. In 2014 the vast majority of students went on to university and every student went on to further education, training or employment.
- School leaders are committed to closing the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students in the sixth form and others. The gap is currently half as wide as it was in 2014. There is also good support for the very small numbers of students in the sixth form who have special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers encourage debate and thoughtful analysis of concepts and topics in lessons. The content and delivery of lessons are well matched to students' individual needs. However, teachers' tracking of their students' progress in the sixth form is not always as systematic as it could be. Teaching is not yet outstanding because not all students are making the rapid progress they could.
- Behaviour and safety in the sixth form are good. Students learn how to stay safe outside of school and in preparation for life beyond the sixth form. There are good opportunities for students to take on responsibilities such as being a prefect and organising school events. Every sixth form student also acts as a mentor for younger students, a responsibility they take very seriously.
- A very small number of students attend courses off the school site. They make similar progress to other students and appropriate and effective systems are in place to monitor their progress, attendance and behaviour. There are also opportunities for students to take part in work experience, mostly linked with work-related courses. Any students who have not already achieved a pass grade at GCSE in Mathematics or English are required to re-take the examination.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104395
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	462529

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duane Williams
Headteacher	Alberto Otero
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2013
Telephone number	01902 558420
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